

## BOARD MEETING MINUTES

The Board of the Washington Fire Commissioners Association held a regular meeting on Saturday, December 5, 2009 at the state association office in Olympia, Washington.

Members present: President Robert Skaggs, Vice President Sharon Colby, Region 1 Director Joe Dawson, Region 2 Alternate Brad Langdell, Region 3 Alternate Dwight Vander Vorste, Region 5 Director Steve Lich, Region 6 Director Jim Farrell, Region 7 Director Jerry Strong, Region 8 Director Keith Merritt and Region 9 Director Mick McKinley.

Also present: Gene Carmody (Port Ludlow Fire & Rescue), Steve Neupert (North Kitsap Fire & Rescue), Verne Pierson (Graham Fire & Rescue), Dick Spring (Clark 6), Miland Walling (Klickitat 2), Ryan Spiller (Capitol Connection), Roger Ferris, Sandy Babcock, Jim Lux and Nora Eyllenfeldt (WFCA).

President Skaggs administered the oath of office to Joe Dawson, who was appointed Region 1 Director at conference as a result of Sharon Colby's appointment as Vice President.

President Skaggs called the meeting to order at 11:03 a.m.

Board members observed a moment of silence for Robert Lansberry, long-time commissioner from Spokane 4, who recently passed away.

Introductions proceeded.

Jerry Strong moved and it was seconded to approve the October 21, 2009 Board meeting minutes as submitted. **Motion carried.**

Mick McKinley moved and it was seconded to approve the agenda as presented. **Motion carried.**

Roger Ferris presented the financial report referring to the November 2009 operating statement noting the WFCA is currently 5% under budget. Year-end financial information will be provided at the January Board meeting. Joe Dawson moved and it was seconded to approve the WFCA's July-November 2009 disbursements, check numbers 22546 through 22767, totaling \$304,239.86. **Motion carried.** President Skaggs accepted the financial report.

Gene Carmody gave the Health Care Committee report. The committee met yesterday and among the topics of discussion was a new state law mandating health care coverage for individuals on Washington State's domestic partner registry. Commissioner Carmody noted that in 2008 the Board adopted domestic partner health care coverage for districts wishing to offer it at the local level. The Health Care Committee recommends the Board adopt the option that states all districts shall conform to the state law to provide coverage and the local fire district shall have the latitude to broaden the coverage beyond that which is state-mandated. Keith Merritt moved and it was seconded to accept the committee's recommendation. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Jim Lux presented the Health Care Manager's report noting eight districts are expected to leave the program at the end of the year. The committee is working on a communication program to elicit

participating districts' input regarding the program. The committee is examining plan options which may include major medical only. There are more large claims than ever before and Mr. Lux estimates a financial shortfall of \$386,000 to \$1 million which will be covered by unrestricted reserves. Mr. Lux noted the committee's action to approve the premium increase for 2010 was prudent in order to maintain the program's solvency. The association has received a number of resumes for the committee vacancies and a process has been established to screen, interview and make recommendations for appointment at the January Board meeting.

Roger Ferris reviewed the health care "in and out" account. President Skaggs accepted the health care report.

Roger Ferris gave the Executive Secretary's report distributing a document outlining proposed email guidelines for the WFCOA Board. Keith Merritt moved and it was seconded to accept the guidelines and include them in the annual Board orientation program. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Roger Ferris gave a conference recap noting although attendance was down by five percent, it was a good conference and finances are in the black. It was suggested the election of officers and Board members occur earlier on Friday to allow more time for tabulating results; staff will investigate. Dwight Vander Vorste suggested the three calls for nominations be reduced to two; Roger Ferris will review this with the WFCOA Parliamentarian.

Sharon Colby presented the Executive Committee report noting the committee met yesterday to discuss Executive Secretary performance evaluations submitted by the Board, which yielded positive reviews. The committee will present a written report including goals at the January Board meeting.

Roger Ferris presented the Education Committee report stating the 2010 Saturday Seminar Series will include the commissioners' role and responsibility class at Spokane (February 20) and Ocean Shores (March 27). The committee met last month to select the subject matter for Chelan which will cover fire department standards of coverage. President Skaggs brought up the possibility of implementing a certification program for commissioners who meet minimum requirements for their elected office; the WFCOA Education Committee could set the requirements and perhaps this could tie in with the WFCOA Strategic Plan. Discussion followed. It was the consensus of the Board that Roger Ferris investigate the financial and staff impacts of administering such a program and report back to the Board. President Skaggs accepted the Education Committee report.

Ryan Spiller and Roger Ferris presented the legislative report noting the major issues identified by the committee for the upcoming session: volunteer recruitment and retention incentives, impact fees, EMS levies (simple majority vote), residential sprinklers, pension protection, no man's land fire protection and consolidation of the Board for Volunteer Firefighters into the Department of Retirement Systems. Mr. Spiller discussed the state budget shortfall and its impact on the WFCOA. He stated Legislative Day will take place on January 20, 2010 in Olympia. President Skaggs accepted the legislative report.

President Skaggs noted that Dean Shelton, fire commissioner representative on the Fire Protection Policy Board, submitted minutes of the Board's recent meeting.

Keith Merritt gave the Fire Service Leadership Forum report stating discussion was held on jurisdictional issues relating to federal highway incidents. Sharon Colby noted discussion was also held on residential sprinklers. It was announced that state fire marshal Mike Matlick will retire February 1. President Skaggs accepted the report.

Steve Lich gave the E911 Advisory Committee report stating the committee met November 19 and among the issues of discussion were E911 taxes on prepaid cell phones (currently none are paid), harassing phone calls from Morocco to 911 centers and the public education efforts on “Know Your Location”. HB 2351, a bill to fund Next Generation 911, will resurface during the 2010 session.

The Board recessed for lunch at 12:40 p.m. The Board reconvened at 1:05 p.m.

Roger Ferris gave the James R. Larson Forum Building report noting the restroom remodel will begin next week. The Department of Information Services’ (DIS) building is under construction and their lease is due to expire in August 2011; Mr. Ferris stated DIS may continue leasing some space in the Forum Building in spite of their new offices. President Skaggs accepted the Forum Building report.

Steve Lich stated he wrote an article for *Fireline* regarding the Management Excellence Award (MEA) program. Discussion followed. Steve Lich moved and it was seconded to change the MEA reporting period to January 1 - December 31 of each year. **Motion carried.** Steve Lich moved and it was seconded to investigate realignment of MEA categories and report back to the Board for possible revisions. **Motion carried.**

Jim Farrell suggested, as part of the Executive Secretary’s performance review, that Roger Ferris read a book entitled *The Non-Profit Board Answer Book* by Jossey-Bass. Commissioner Farrell stated this is a practical reference and is one of the best books he has read on the role of board members and chief executives; he suggested the association purchase the book for Board members. President Skaggs directed Roger Ferris to make this part of his evaluation and look into the feasibility of purchasing books and report back to the Board.

Roger Ferris referred to a memo he wrote suggesting elimination of the December Board meeting in order to trim the 2010 budget. This is one of the most expensive Board meetings and comes approximately six weeks after conference and six weeks prior to the bylaws-mandated January meeting. Additionally, the financial information provided at the December meeting is the same as that provided at the October meeting (third quarter finances). The following Board meeting dates were proposed for 2010: Wednesday, January 19 (the day prior to Legislative Day in Olympia) at 3:00 p.m.; Friday, April 30 (the day prior to Legislative Roundtable in Yakima)—start time to be determined; Saturday, July 10 in Olympia at 1:00 p.m.; Wednesday, October 27 (just prior to conference in Pasco). Mr. Ferris suggested a Board and staff dinner on Tuesday, October 26 in Pasco, with a 9:00 a.m. start time for the meeting on October 27; the earlier start time would allow Board members to attend the Legal Committee Meeting that afternoon. Joe Dawson moved and it was seconded to table adoption of Board meeting dates until the 2010 budget is adopted. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Keith Merritt suggested reinstating the joint luncheon with the Washington Fire Chiefs’ Board; this was done in the past at the July meeting for the purpose of improving communications with the WFC.

President Skaggs announced committee and other appointments, as follows:

**BYLAWS:** Chair Jim Farrell (Mountain View Fire and Rescue), Bill Hansen (Port Ludlow Fire & Rescue), Brad Langdell (Walla Walla 5), Ron Shuck (Franklin 3), Leslie Jo Wells (Snohomish 3).

**EDUCATION:** Chair Les Riel (Yakima 4), Ken Anderson (Skagit 2), Lee Boling (Spokane 8), Ed Egan (Pierce 8), Bob Miller (Woodinville Fire & Life Safety District), Robert Muhleman (Central Kitsap Fire & Rescue), Verne Pierson (Graham Fire & Rescue), Mark Thompson (South King Fire & Rescue), Roy Waugh (Snohomish 7).

**EMS/TRAUMA CARE:** WFCRA Representative Chris Caviezel (Snoqualmie Pass Fire and Rescue).

**ENHANCED 911 ADVISORY:** WFCRA Representative Steve Lich (Camano Island Fire & Rescue).

**FIRE SERVICE LEADERSHIP FORUM:** Sharon Colby (Spokane 3), Keith Merritt (Cowlitz 2 Fire & Rescue), Dale Mitchell (Pierce 8).

**FIREFIGHTER TECHNICAL REVIEW ADVISORY (L&I):** Dave Ellingson (Poulsbo Fire Department), Bob Barnard (Thurston 9).

**HEALTH SAFETY ADVISOR:** Bob Barnard (Thurston 9).

**LEGISLATIVE:** Chair and Region 4 Member Miland Walling (Klickitat 2), Region 1 Member Jack Hensley (Spokane 4), Region 2 Member Todd Blackman (Franklin 3), Region 3 Member Dwight Vander Vorste (Grant 10), Region 5 Member Brian McMahan (Snohomish 1), Region 6 Member Ronnie Behnke (King 40), Region 7 Member Richard Kistler (Thurston 7), Region 8 Member Dick Spring (Clark 6), Region 9 Member Ralph Rogers (Central Kitsap Fire & Rescue).

**PARLIAMENTARIAN:** William Hansen (Port Ludlow Fire & Rescue).

**PRE-HOSPITAL TECHNICAL ADVISORY:** Barb Meyer (Grant 5).

**RISK MANAGEMENT:** Bill Jarmon, Pierce 5.

**SERGEANT-AT-ARMS:** Dick Spring, Clark 6.

It was announced that the fire commissioner position on the Fire Protection Policy Board is up for reappointment. Roger Ferris will send an email to commissioners requesting letters of interest by January 19, 2010 so the Board can recommend three names to the Governor. Verne Pierson has expressed an interest in the position.

Dick Spring thanked the Board for appointing him Sergeant-at-Arms and in honor of the previous Sergeant-at-Arms, Penny Dollar, he would like to carry on the tradition of wearing the green jacket.

Discussion was held on ways to reduce the 2010 WFCRA budget, among them:

- Increase the use of conference calls and electronic communication.
- Reduce printing and mailing of lawbooks and *Fireline*.
- Reduce regional training funding.
- Eliminate cost of living adjustments and out of state travel for staff.

Steve Lich noted the importance of *Fireline* as a communication tool and suggested that if the number of publications is reduced, we look at other ways to communicate with the membership, perhaps through a periodic electronic newsletter. Regional educational funding was discussed and it was noted that resources not used by one region could be used by another. Sharon Colby moved to adopt the 2010 budget in the amount of \$539,200. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Keith Merritt moved and it was seconded to approve the proposed dates for 2010 Board meetings and to invite the Washington Fire Chiefs Board to a joint luncheon in July. **Motion carried.**

Roger Ferris stated he talked with the Executive Committee regarding a performance incentive for staff. Discussion followed. Jim Farrell asked about Health Care Manager Jim Lux; Roger Ferris responded he has already adjusted Mr. Lux's salary which is paid with health care funds. Joe Dawson moved to amend the budget to add a restricted reserve to provide a total of 1) \$900 each for the executive secretary and three clerical staff if the WFCA meets \$545,000 in projected income, and 2) \$900 each for the executive secretary and three clerical staff if the budget comes in under \$539,200; the incentive to be payable at the end of 2010. **Motion carried unanimously.** Mr. Ferris thanked the Board.

Regional directors presented their reports.

Gene Carmody stated it has been a pleasure to serve as Region 9 Alternate for Mick McKinley and asked that it be in the record that Commissioner McKinley "is a stand up guy." Commissioner McKinley received a round of applause.

President Skaggs presented gifts to the Board.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.